



TREND OF DECADAL GROWTH RATE OF POPULATION IN ASSAM: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Assam is characterized by a very high rate of population growth which is even higher than the country's average growth throughout the present century. This paper tries to show the trend of decadal growth rate population in Assam during the period 1901-2011. The growth rate of population in Assam and other North-Eastern states is somewhat unnatural as compared states of the country. But the birth and the death rates of the state does not differ much from the national average. It means that had there been no migration into the state, the growth rate of population in Assam would have been almost similar with that of the average growth rates in the country. Thus, it can be said that growth of population in Assam has taken place due to both natural increase and migration. However it is seen that the migration of people was very small in the early 19th century and pre-independent period. Accordingly, two district demographic phase with 1951 as a divide may be identified in the demographic history of the State.

KEYWORDS: Assam, decadal growth rate, migration.

INTRODUCTION:

Population growth is the change of population over time, and can be determined as the change in the number of individuals in a population using per unit time for measurement. It is associated with a variety of demographic, socio-cultural and economic factors; and constitutes an important component of the population study of an area. It reflects the prevailing dynamism of demographic character in the area. The way a very low population growth or zero population growth in the developed countries is a problem, the same way a very high population growth in the less developed countries is also a problem. As a matter of fact, a rapid growth of population, when caused by high fertility and large scale migration, results in the rise of population pressure on resources and significant change in the demographic and socio-economic character of population (Sharma and Kar, 1997). Such a situation is prevalent in Assam, which has given rise to a number of demographic, socio-economic and political problems of varied dimensions.

The term population growth more often termed as population growth rate, it is generally obtained by dividing the change by the period of time elapsed during the change. Thus, growth rate of a population is the number of individuals added to the population per time. Population growth rate ordinarily refers to the change in population over a unit time period, often expressed as a percentage of the number of individuals in the population at the beginning of that period. This ratio of population growth may either positive or negative. A positive growth ratio/ rate indicate that the population is increasing, while a negative growth ratio/ rate indicates population decline. A growth ratio of zero indicates that there has been no change of population in the two periods. The Decadal growth rate on the other hand, is the percentage of total population growth in a particular decade. It is a vital part of Census operations which gives an overview of the percentage of total population growth in a particular decade. So, this paper is tries to understand the trend of decadal growth rate of population in Assam in relation to India.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This paper intend to analyze the decadal growth of population and population density in Assam and in India, from 1901-2011. It tries to find out the cause in the change of trend in the area in different decades.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA BASE:

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The present study has used secondary data to meet its objectives. Secondary data was collected from official publications like Economic Survey, Assam, Census of India reports etc. and websites of Government of Assam and Government of India. The data are presented in graphical form for the clear understanding of the change in the trend of decadal growth rate in Assam.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Decadal Variation of Population in Assam

According to the Census of India, 2011 the population of Assam stands at 3, 11, 69,272, of which 1, 59, 54,927 are males and 1, 52, 14,345 females. The decadal growth of the State's population works out to 16.93 per cent during the decade 2001-2011 as against 17.64 per cent for the country as a whole. In most of the decades during the last century the growth rate of population in Assam has been well above the national growth rate. This difference has been witnessed perhaps due to continuous migration from the neighbouring states and countries.

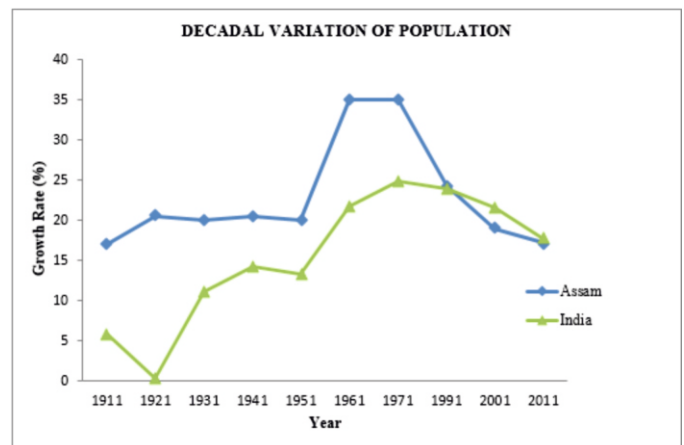


Fig 1: Trend line showing the variation of decadal growth rate of population in Assam and India in different periods.

During the period 1991-2011, Assam saw an overall increase 16.99 percent against all India average of 5.76 per cent. This increase was the lowest during the last five decades mainly due to the fact that Assam during this decade was still recovering from wide- spread Kala-ajar havoc during the preceding decade.

During the decade 1911-21, India experienced a negative growth rate of 0.31 percent due to rapid and frequent occurrence of epidemics like cholera, plague, influenza and famines. The year of 1921 is known as the 'Year of Great Divide' for India's population. As against this Assam experienced a positive growth rate of 20.48 percent. During the decade 1921-31, Assam witnessed a slightly lower percentage of growth of population than that of the preceding decade. In this decade the growth rate in Assam was 19.91 percent as against 11 percent in India. The following two decades also had an almost similar growth rate i.e. 20.4 and 19.93 percent. The increase of population in the State in these decades was caused by three main factors namely (1) natural growth of the existing population, (2) large expansion of tea industry which imported 7.69 lakh of tea garden labourers in to the State and (3) the immigration from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and Nepal.

During 1951-61, there was a sudden increase in the growth rate of population from 19.93 percent in the previous decade to 34.98 percent, as against 21.64 percent in India. This increase in population was mainly due to large scale migration of Bengali Hindu population from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after the partition of India. They migrated in huge numbers and settled in the plains of Assam resulting in a sudden increase of population in this decade. The 1961-1971 decade also experienced a almost same growth rate i.e 34.95 percent.

But after this period, the growth rate decreased slowly and in the decade 1991-2001 the growth rate of Assam (18.92%) was lower than the national average for the first time. In the recent period i.e. the growth rate of population of Assam is

17.06 percent as against 17.68 percent in India. This decrease was mainly due to formulation of many family planning measures and also increased in the literacy rate.

Decadal Variation of population in the Districts of Assam:

India's population growth is divided in to four phases and they are: period of stable population (1891-1921), period of steady rise (1921-1951), Period of population explosion (1951-1981), period of declining growth rate of population (1981 onwards). But the districts of Assam did not follow this trend of population

growth because of some socio-economic and political reasons along with natural ones. From the table it is observed that even in the period of stable population in India, the districts of Assam showed a high growth rate and among the districts Goalpara experienced the highest growth rate in this period i.e. 37.07. It was because people from Mymensing and East Bengal (now Bangladesh) advanced towards Goalpara, driven apparently by pressure on the soil at home. In the case of Lakhimpur, the high percentage increase in mainly due to large-scale importation of tea garden labourers. The North Cachar Hills district showed a negative of population, i.e., -33.12 per cent during this period. In the period of steady rise

Table 1: Decadal Growth Rate of population of the districts of Assam, 1901-2011.

District	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-91	1991-2001	2001-11
Barpeta	20.02	34.04	69.02	44.06	34.39	33.91	40.97	19.62	21.43	34.39
Bongaigaon	29.94	26.94	15.94	20.85	36.27	35.81	38.77	22.09	20.59	36.27
Cachar	12.33	5.98	7.6	13.08	22.6	23.96	47.59	18.89	20.19	22.6
Darrang	-0.25	11.78	26	35.3	24.13	44.75	43.24	55.63	22.18	22.19
Dhemaji	45.3	6.3	16.9	8.41	75.21	103.42	107.5	19.45	19.97	75.21
Dhubri	32.76	11.42	6.05	10.57	43.74	43.26	45.65	22.97	24.44	43.74
Dibrugarh	27.1	38.4	22.34	10.87	30.64	22.93	37.78	13.68	11.92	30.64
Goalpara	27.41	37.07	20.5	7.73	9.25	37.1	45.88	54.12	23.03	22.64
Golaghat	16.25	20.14	18.29	1.48	19.76	26.04	30.85	58.12	14.27	12.75
Hailakandi	16.09	7.59	7.6	13.08	17.48	27.23	23.61	45.94	20.89	21.45
Jorhat	16.62	17.54	8.88	15.12	15.03	24.17	17.47	33.1	15.82	6.21
Kamrup	11.16	7.06	9.32	14.6	17.01	45.12	44.48	81.53	14.97	15.69
Karbi Anglong					30.96	79.21	68.28	74.72	22.72	17.58
Karimganj	12.94	3.19	5.91	9.52	29.87	22.96	25.13	42.08	21.87	21.9
Kokrajhar	16.7	9.75	39.68	26.59	17.11	55.41	54.89	61.96	14.49	5.21
Lakhimpur	17.3	22.82	25.99	36.98	17.94	50.46	43.39	56.29	18.3	17.22
Morigaon	15.5	31.99	41.66	30.87	36.63	37.89	37.51	50.9	21.35	23.34
N.C.Hills	-33.12	5.92	13.6	13.75	6.16	36.95	40	98.3	24.72	13.84
Nagaon	15.84	31.94	41.35	10.34	36.65	35.91	38.99	51.26	22.26	22
Nalbari	13.33	14.2	27.92	39.92	35.15	33.56	31.79	75.78	14.21	11.99
Sibsagar	13.41	20.46	14.44	15.64	15.98	23.36	19.47	38.76	14.69	9.31
Sonitpur	24.33	24.69	20.5	19.73	22.02	41.99	33.17	68.08	18.11	15.55
Tinsukia	27.1	28.32	27	34.77	17.94	35.92	31.02	47.03	19.51	15.47

Source: Economic survey, Assam, 2013-14

(1921-51), Barpeta experienced the highest growth rate of population among all the districts with a growth rate of 69.02 percent. On the other hand, Golaghat experienced the lowest population growth rate i.e. 1.48 percent. In the period of population explosion (1951-81), some of the districts experienced a tremendous growth rate of population like Dhemaji 107.5 percent, followed by Kamrup and Karbi Anglong. Whereas the lowest growth rate was experienced by Dibrugarh i.e. 13.68 percent. During the period of declining population (since 1981) Kokrajhar has experienced the lowest population growth among all the states of Assam.

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